

# Oaks @ Home



“God is our refuge and strength,  
an ever-present help in trouble.

<sup>2</sup>Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way  
and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,

<sup>3</sup>though its waters roar and foam  
and the mountains quake with their surging.<sup>[c]</sup>

<sup>4</sup>There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,  
the holy place where the Most High dwells.

<sup>5</sup>God is within her, she will not fall;  
God will help her at break of day.

<sup>6</sup>Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall;  
he lifts his voice, the earth melts.

<sup>7</sup>The LORD Almighty is with us;  
the God of Jacob is our fortress.”

Psalm 46: 1-7

Like every church or Christian community, Oaks is about the people.



We are Oaks not because of Oak House but because of each other. In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul tells us “you are the body of Christ and each one of you is a part of it” (1 Cor 12.27). This is true no matter where you are, even if we are unable to gather together at Oak House, we are all still Oaks – the body of Christ on our estate, and each of us is a part – a valuable and loved part- of it.

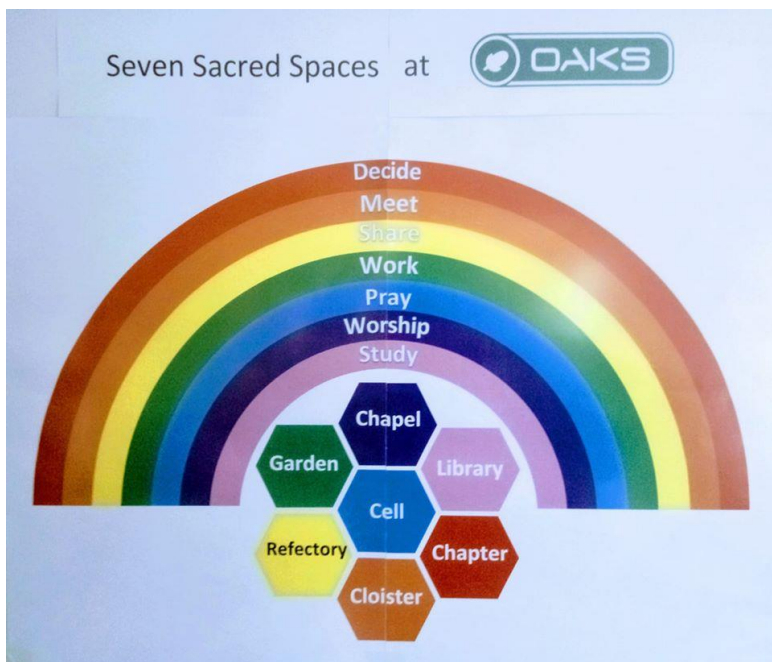
While we are, with people around the world, working hard to control the spread and threat of Covid-19 (Coronavirus), we are unlikely to be able to meet in the same way as we have done.

This does not mean we can't worship God and encounter Him in the 7 Sacred Spaces which are the basis of our Rule of Life at Oaks. It just means the way we do that needs to look different.

In this booklet there are some ideas for how we can engage with the 7 Sacred Spaces, and encounter God while we are self-isolating or unable to meet in the same way.

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# Cell.

This is the space where we encounter God by reading the bible and praying on our own. Isolation offers us a great excuse to do this more!

Here are some tips in how to use your cell time:

## *Praying by yourself*

There are lots of ways to pray by yourself, these are just a few suggestions.

### Listen and Reflect

Sit comfortably away from distractions.

Listen to the sounds around you and acknowledge them

Deepen your breathing

Focus on God, offer him your thanks and praise, ask him to be part of your day.

When you're ready, read a passage of scripture (see the Library section for guidance on how to read the bible)

### Set prayers of the church

You could pray these prayers which are used by Christians around the world, and that we pray sometimes in Morning prayer at Oak House.

*O High king of heaven have mercy on Skelmersdale.*

*Revive your Church here.*

*Send the Holy Spirit for the sake of the children.*

*May your Kingdom come to our town, in Jesus' mighty name. Amen.*

*Christ as a light illumine and guide me, Christ as a shield overshadow me.*

*Christ under me, Christ over me, Christ beside me, on my left and my right.*

*This day be within and without me, lowly and meek yet all powerful. Be in the heart of each to whom I speak, in the mouth of each who speaks to me.*

*This day be within and without me, lowly and meek yet all powerful.*

*Christ as a light, Christ as a shield, Christ beside me on my left and my right.*

#### Praying the Lord's Prayer

It is how Jesus taught us to pray, try saying it slowly, pausing after each line to consider what it means to you right now to pray those words.

*Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.*

*Give us today our daily bread.*

*Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.*

*Lead us not into temptation  
but deliver us from evil.*

*For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours  
now and for ever.*

*Amen.*

### 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 prayer

This is a simple way to pray which we sometimes use at Midday prayer at Oak House, it is great for use with all ages so why not use it to pray as a family:

Think of 5 things you love and say thank you to God them. Think of 4 sad or cross people, ask God to help them.

Think of 3 things you've enjoyed doing since yesterday and thank God for them.

Think of 2 things you want to say sorry about, know that God forgives us all totally.

Finally, think of 1 thing you are really good at and thank God for that gift.

### Reading the bible prayerfully

Try doing the following:

- Pray that God would speak to you as you read the passage of the bible.
- Read it through once and notice which word or phrase stands out for you
- Read it again and consider why that is standing out?
- Read it again and ask God to speak to you as you consider the phrase or word.

*Some passages you could read to pray in this way:*

psalm 23, psalm 46, psalm 1, genesis 32:22-32, mark 4:35-41, john 1:1-14.

### Free Prayer Apps for on your smart phone:

Lectio365 and The Inner Room (24/7 Prayer), Daily Prayer (Church of England), Reflect, pray as you go, The Try Praying App.

# Library

This is about studying and learning, from the bible, other books, or blogs which help to build us up in our faith.

You could try working through a different book of the bible, maybe on your own reading a chapter at a time. Or you could phone a friend and read together or read it with your family.

*Some suggestions to get started:*

Any of the gospels – why not start with Mark or Luke.

Acts – this is the story of the early church

Jonah – a great story in the Old Testament with lots of twists and turns

Colossians – a letter from Paul to the church in Colossae which helps us to think about what it means to follow Jesus.

*Some good questions to think about as you read:*

What is being said to the original audience?

How is the writer saying it (poetry, story, eyewitness report)?

What is God saying through it to you/us now?

If you haven't got a bible at home, you can read it online at [biblegateway.com](http://biblegateway.com) (we'd suggest reading NIVUK version or the message version) or you can download the YouVersion bible app on your phone which has free reading plans you can sign up for.

Facebook

Every day Oaks will upload a 'thought of the day' to our Facebook page. This will be a brief thought based on a bible passage, either to read or listen to or watch. if you are not able to access Facebook and

you'd like to get an email or text with this, let Rachel or Duncan know.

### Podcasts

The Bible Project

bibleproject.com has some interesting podcasts and some brilliant videos and bible studies.

The Bible for normal people

A great podcast available on Apple podcasts or

[www.thebiblefornormalpeople.podbean.com](http://www.thebiblefornormalpeople.podbean.com) There is also a blog from one of the creators which you can read at [www.peteenns.com](http://www.peteenns.com)

### App:

BiOY from Alpha is a free bible in one year reading plan. It includes the ability to either listen or read bible passages and commentary. The bible passages are read by David Suchet AKA Poirot!

### Reading the bible with children

Bible app for kids

bibleappforkids.com is a great resource for young people to read the bible – includes videos and games.

### Reading Christian Books

There are some brilliant books out there which will enrich and deepen your faith. If you'd like some suggestions contact Duncan or Rachel and we will make some! We may even be able to lend you books from either our own selection or someone else at Oaks who has it. If you are not able to get out, we will arrange to get it to you!



# Cloister

While we can't gather in large numbers while isolated, we can spend time in our gardens or walk in our local area to get some fresh air. Pray for the cloister opportunities that could come about while doing this. Be sensible about how close we stand to each other, and don't go out if you are showing symptoms or feeling unwell.

This virus also offers us an opportunity to get to know our neighbours a bit better. Could you offer to help with shopping for an elderly neighbour? Could you speak to your neighbours and let them know you will help if they are unable to get out because they are advised so?

- Please be aware of your safety, and of safeguarding for vulnerable adults and children in doing so - don't put yourself at risk but do be loving and friendly.
- It is not advised that you go visiting people who are in isolation, but you can drop food at the door, and pick up their order/cash for it.
- If someone asks for medical advice, point them to NHS 111, either on the phone or website. If you are unsure how to help or want some advice, speak to Duncan and Rachel and we will help think it through.

# Chapel

This is the thing we will all be missing the most if we are in isolation, it is when we come together with other people to worship God.

This will not be the same if are isolated in our homes. It is possible to find new ways to engage though, here are some suggestions.

## Christian radio stations or TV programmes

UCB – available online at [ucb.co.uk](http://ucb.co.uk) or on DAB radio. They have two channels, UCB 1 and UCB 2.

Premier Radio – [premierchristianradio.com](http://premierchristianradio.com), Freeview channel 725, and DAB radio. They have three channels: Premier Christian Radio, Premier Praise and Premier Gospel.

BBC radio still broadcast various religious programmes. You can search for them on the BBC sounds app, go to search and look under 'religion and ethics'.

Some to listen out for include:

BBC radio 4 lent talks, every Wednesday evening 8.45pm.

Radio 4 broadcasts a Sunday service from a different church in the UK every Sunday morning at 8.10am.

Songs of Praise is on BBC one at 1.15pm on Sunday, or you can watch again on BBC iPlayer. (Check TV guides in case times change).

### Facebook prayer/worship

Oaks will be uploading on to Facebook a 'thought for the day' each day. If you would like this on email or text and aren't on Facebook please get in touch with Rachel or Duncan.

We will also post other content such as worship music videos, some prayers etc.

If we are unable to gather at Oak House for Sunday Worship, we can do so over Facebook live, watch Facebook for the latest on when and how we will do this.

We know this will mean some people who do not have access to Facebook are unable to use this option, but it will offer another option should we be unable to meet in person.

### Morning Pray with Oaks on Zoom

Morning prayer will continue at 9.15. Because we won't be able to meet at Oak House to do this, we are planning to use a free video conferencing tool called Zoom. You would need to sign up for an account (its free) at <https://zoom.us/signup> Let Duncan or Rachel know if you'd like to do this, and we will invite you to the 'meeting' online at 9.15.

If you can't join us online but would like to pray why not join us in prayer by praying at home at 9.15.

We are working our way through a book of the bible reading a chapter every morning, if you'd like to read the same one we will put the chapter we are planning to read on Facebook each day or text you it if you let us know you would like to read along.

### Prayer group on Facebook

Within the Oaks Page on Facebook we have created a Prayer Group – this is to share prayer requests with one another. It isn't a public group; you need to be invited to join. If you'd like to join ask, either via the Facebook page or by speaking to Duncan or Rachel and we will sort that out.

### Listen to Christian music

Oaks is creating a YouTube playlist with some of our favourites, we will share this on Facebook or by email or text. Why not put it on and sing along!

You could listen together with someone over the phone/WhatsApp call or Skype etc or with your family if you are with them in the house. There are lots of other songs you can search for on YouTube – it might be an opportunity to find some new ones we can all share when we come back together.

## **Refectory**

Eating with others is an important part of our life at Oaks.

If you are in isolation alone and you miss having meals with other people, maybe you could speak to a friend and arrange to phone them or Skype/FaceTime/WhatsApp video call them at dinner time so you share the meal time together, or listen to a worship song as you eat!

If you are working from home, remember to make time to stop for lunch. Maybe take it into a different room, so you give yourself a proper break.

If you're having a catch up and a pray over the phone with someone from Oaks, or anyone who you would normally go out with, make a drink, get comfortable and 'have a coffee' together over the phone.

# Garden

We encounter God in the work we do, whether paid or unpaid. If you are working from home, you are still able to encounter God in that. Are there ways that you could volunteer to help your neighbours? Keep in touch with vulnerable family and friends by phone etc. If we are, as a community, in isolation more and more, there are lots of opportunities to serve the community around you.

Working from home if you aren't used to it can be an adjustment. Here are some suggestions which might help you:

Establish where and when you work – this will help you be clear when you are 'at work' and when you aren't. Boundaries are important. Remember to take breaks and lunch and if you can, get some fresh air.

Work out how to communicate with colleagues so you don't get isolated. Not just for 'work' but to maintain those relationships as well.

Get dressed for work, even though you're not going anywhere!

# Chapter

Our response to this virus is being made in response to government and Church of England guidance. However, throughout the decisions about what that looks like in Oaks have been made in chapter conversations. Those conversations and the relationships we have in Oaks will not be broken by us being isolated, we will simply have those conversations in different ways.

Phone each other, message one another. Share funny stories, God news, your frustrations, prayer needs and fears with one another. We can still help each other decide what to do, enjoy each other's successes and laugh at each other's jokes over the phone. It's different, but it can work.

We will be able to make use of groups within our Oaks Facebook page to do this, so you may be invited into groups over the next few days that will enable chapter conversations to happen in this way. If and when we do get this up and running, please be mindful of those who aren't on Facebook and may be missing out – and seek to include them in another way.

We will be establishing a system to ensure that everyone who is isolated is contacted regularly. Duncan and Rachel will be coordinating this response, but this should be the minimum we do as a community, let's make this a time when our relationships get stronger not weaker.